

HOBART TOWN TASMANIA
JUN 14 72

MELBOURNE
80
JUN 12
72



~~James~~
Cousin Maggie's
care of Mrs. of
Victoria Street

Hobart Mather Jun -
9, Liverpool Street -
Hobart - Town

M. 12/43

M. 19/43

Account of the Wreck of the "Victoria Bower"

17. X. 1869.

16. X. 1869. Just two months all but a day has passed since we were wrecked in the noble Victoria Bower off the Barwon Heads near the entrance to Hobsons Bay, Melbourne whither we were bound from Old England.

It had been very stormy all day & we passed Cape Otway in a very strong gale of wind, but we had no gloomy forebodings, having the utmost confidence in our Captain (Kerr by name).

After supper, Mrs Kerr, Mr Lloyd, Jennie and I sat up talking a long time - about going on shore on the morrow. We retired to bed about 12 P.M. & had not long been in bed, when we felt the ship strike; she gave three terrific bumps & was knocked about violently with the waves, they were very high as there was quite a gale blowing - I jumped out of bed though I could scarcely stand & trembled violently with fright. I went to Pa's Cabin door; he said "get dressed as

quickly as possible for the boats" — we
slipped on a few things hurriedly & went
into the saloon where all the passengers
were assembled. (as it was the only safe
place) dear little Ida who was fast
asleep in bed had to be taken up & dressed
she could not make it out but was
very good — The ship was bumping
about dreadfully and amidst the
roaring and thumping of the waves
against her side, we could ^{hear} the masts
falling & timbers creaking; all was
in confusion & darkness outside. and
inside the saloon, the glasses flew out
of the serving tray with a crash caused
by the violent bumpings of the vessel.

The passengers were all collected in
the saloon the sailors also, for they
had done all that could be done —

Every one looked very white & anxious
for we did not know what moment
the ship might break up amidst
those roaring waves & we might all
be hurried into eternity; but God
in his mercy & great loving kindness,
kept us, though dangers surrounded

us on every side; Was I ready to appear before Him! Surely the rest of my life should be spent in praising his glorious name and manifold Kindnesses, so visibly manifested towards me through his love —

The sailors had launched the boats with difficulty three of which were smashed by the waves, leaving only the two life boats; into one of these Mr Martin (the second mate) Mr Ruthven & three sailors jumped, so as to be ready to receive the women; but a falling mast obliged them to cut away the rope & just-escaped being smashed beneath the mast — They found it impossible to get back to the ship, so they made for the shore which they could distinguish by the line of white breakers; they told us afterwards they had great-difficulty in landing — all on board thought the poor fellows had been killed by the falling mast; for it was so very dark nothing could be seen around — The Captain decided we had better not risk having our only remaining boat smashed

in the darkness but wait - until day-
light dawned, for as long as the
ship held together we were safe
in remaining - We had four
hours to wait - for day break
and a fearful four hours it was,
longer horrible; the sea was dashing
over the ship with great force &
pouring down into the saloon;
the motion of the ships violent
bumpings made Ann and
Ida both sea sick - When day
dawned the Captain said all the
ladies were to go on shore first;
and he asked Papa to take
charge of the boat, we were carried
across the main deck on sailors
backs, as the water was high, above
the men's knees - with some difficulty
we managed to get into the
boat - in which were seated (oars
in hand) the 3rd & 4th mates
the Boatswain - two sailors &
Papa to steer; all the ladies managed
to get into this boat - nobody
ever can imagine our feelings

as we pushed off in this frail
boat on those angry looking billows
from that - unfortunate ship, a perfect
wreck, she tossed about wildly with
her nose firmly embedded in the
sand - before starting the Captain
had attached a rope to the stern
of the boat, by which to draw her
back again through the surf for
them after we had got to shore -
however the waves were so strong
+ pulled the rope so dreadfully we
were obliged to cut it - to prevent the
boat from capsizing - as it was
she fast filled with water + the
immense breakers rolled right
over us every few minutes with tremen-
dous force - Poor little Ida was
washed off my knee, for the breaker
came with such force, I was sense-
less for a few minutes, we were all
washed out of the boat - too - I
managed to get hold of Ida's
leg, another great breaker coming
however separated us + I gave her
up as drowned, indeed I made

sure we should all be drowned, the shore seemed so far off & the breakers were so strong & high - however although nearly senseless the waves washed us to shore & I managed at last to creep out of the way of those horrible waves - Jennie & I were the only ones then on shore Jennie brave girl was the first - she had heroically jumped out - It was a long time before we got ~~safely~~ ~~to~~ our breath freely - the rest all got safely to us though perfectly exhausted a sailor had managed to pull our dear little Ida - she said 'Maggie is this the pilot?' she had heard us talk of the pilot - coming the day before. Thus we landed on that fearful morning 17th October 1869.

suffice it to say they after much difficulty managed to get the boat back to the ship & every one got on shore safely - we found some cottages not far off from the scene of disaster; the inmates were very kind to us & we dried our clothes; we then went to a gentleman's home -

stead not far distant (Mr Noble)
+ had a comfortable night's rest -
We were about 15 miles from Geelong
a small town about 40 miles from
Melbourne (our destination). Whether
we went the next day by train - There
was quite a crowd at the station to
see the poor shipwrecked ones -
with clothes on better shelter - Jennie
no hat + no stockings - An
enquiry was held by the steam
navigation board + Capt. Ross's
Certificate suspended for six
months - We lost every thing
except a few old things -

Copied for Robert = 6. vi. 1872.
by his loving Cousin
Maggie Dicketter

Pinch Lher
Essendon -